

A. Executive Summary

- **Evaluation**

Evaluation of students in regard to special education is done by the local district's Area Education Agency (AEA) State law requires that general education interventions be tried prior to evaluating a student to determine eligibility and need for special education. Most AEAs have a problem solving or solution focus process in place which assists districts in developing plans for trying general education interventions.

- **Identification of Students**

Once general education interventions have been tried and it is determined that the child is in need of further assistance, a referral giving permission to evaluate is signed by the child's parents or guardians. Once the referral is signed, the AEA and Local Education Agency (LEA) staff and the parents decide what types of assessments are needed. Once these assessments are completed an IEP meeting is held and a decision is made to determine eligibility and need. When eligibility and need are determined placement is made according to the child's educational needs.

- **Services**

Special education services in LEAs are provided by either rules-based program models or by an approved district developed delivery system. Provision of services to a child is based on the decisions made by the child's IEP team at the time of initial placement and each annual review that follows. Each AEA provides special education support services to the LEAs. The AEA is also responsible for the evaluation of students prior to placement in special education.

- **Count**

On December 1st of each school year the Certified Special Education count is done in each LEA. This is a count of students who have current Individualized Education Programs (IEPs.) The LEA, in conjunction with the AEA, is responsible for this count and once it is completed each LEA superintendent must certify the count for his or her district. It is important to reconcile your class rosters with the certified count numerous times during the school year; suggestions for such reconciliation would include at the end of the 1st semester, at the end of a grading period and prior to the end of the year, around May 1st.

- **Funding and Costs**

Funding for the provision of special education services by LEAs is determined by the state foundation formula and is paid up to the state foundation level of 87.5% after the uniform levy. All costs related to the provision of special education are called actual costs and are to be paid for with state special education dollars. This funding is distributed according to the December count of the previous school year. See "Count" above.

Special education support services provided by AEAs are paid for with federal, state and local property tax dollars. Each AEA receives part of the federal Part B

Individual with Disabilities Education Act – 1997 (IDEA97) money. As with LEA special education dollars, this money is distributed according to the December count of the previous school year. See “Count” above.

- **Reporting and Accountability**

Each LEA must, at the end of each fiscal year (July 1 through June 30), report to the state how they expended the special education dollars during that fiscal year. They must complete the Special Education Supplement to the Certified Annual Report each year. This report is due on September 15th. A desk audit is completed at the Department of Education and final balances are reported to the School Budget Review Committee at the December meeting (2nd Monday of December) each year. Each LEA will receive assistance from the AEA in completing their student count on December 1st of each school year. See “Count” above.

Each AEA must, at the end of each fiscal year (July 1 through June 30), report to the state how they expended federal, state and local property tax dollars for the special education support services provided. They submit a Special Education Supplement to the Certified Annual Report to report how dollars were expended for the special education instructional programs provided by the AEA. On the Certified Annual Report an AEA shows how dollars were expended for the special education support services provide to LEAs. Each AEA is responsible for the special education count in each of their LEAs. See “Count” above.

- **School Budget Review Committee (SBRC) Actions**

After the desk audit of the Special Education Supplement is completed at the Department of Education the balance for each district is reported to the SBRC at their December meeting (2nd Monday in December each year.) If an LEA has a negative balance they must submit a letter requesting allowable growth and the supplemental aid payment to the SBRC. The template for this letter will be included with the Special Education Supplement. If a LEA has a positive balance they may carry over 10% of the additional weighted dollars into the next fiscal year. All districts are notified by the department of their final balances and any possible carryover following the December SBRC meeting.

The SBRC also approves LEA requests for charging additional administrative costs. An LEA must submit a letter to the DE requesting this approval. This approval is only given at the December SBRC meeting. It is given for the next school year, for example at the December 2001 SBRC approval will be given for the 2002-2003 school year.